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AUTHOR Smith, Gordon W.
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ABSTRACT

This report examines the problem of diminishing opportunities for professional library education in California. The first section examines topics related to the supply of and demand for librarians and library education programs, including U.S. and California demographics on librarianship and library education, librarianship and the information explosion, and the status of library education in California. Issues and constraints in expanding opportunities for library education are addressed in the second section, including accreditation, costs of establishing a new school, and an extension program at San Jose State. The third section presents approaches to meeting these needs and developing library education programs in the California State University (CSU), including systemwide and regional programs, dual degree programs, continuing education for librarians, recruitment of minorities to the library profession, and the role of the CSU libraries in library education. (Contains 10 references.) (MES)

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LIBRARY EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA:

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A Report of the Council of Library Directors

The California State University

November 1991

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A Report of the Council of Library Directors

The California State University

prepared by

Gordon W. Smith
Associate Director,
Library Affairs
Office of the Chancellor

November 1991

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The quality of library services in California is threatened by a serious shortage of opportunities in professional library education. The three existing programs offering the Master of Library Science degree cannot meet present and expected demand as the result of enrollment limits, geographical location and student costs.

Dramatic changes occurring in the ethnic makeup of the California population, in library technology, and in the nature and quantity of information all serve to intensify the effects of the library education crisis. The more than 1,000 libraries in California need professionals trained to respond to the needs of the full range of ethnic and cultural groups in the population, and they need professionals who are capable of using the full range of available information resources and library technological advances. To meet these needs, high quality professional education is required for those entering the library profession as well as continuing education for professionals seeking up to date skills.

The California State University is ideally suited to meet these demands. The university's size and diversity, its mission in graduate training, and its innovation in distance learning and extended education combine to create opportunities for creative approaches to library education. As an immediate step, the extended education program offered by San Jose State in southern California should become part of the regular state-supported curriculum at a southern CSU campus. In addition, the CSU's forgivable loan program should be expanded to include library science students intending to seek employment as library faculty in the CSU.

Beyond these measures, the CSU should commit to marshaling its diverse resources and creativity to enrich opportunities in library education, a commitment which will benefit all the citizens of California who use libraries.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A crisis of demand and supply is developing in California which will dramatically affect the quality of library services available to a population increasing in size and diversity. The crisis is a quiet one and subtly gradual in comparison to multi-billion dollar budget shortfalls and economic recession, but over time the crisis will affect every student, teacher and public library user in the state.

The explosive changes occurring in information technology in combination with the increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-cultural population in California are placing the library profession under considerable stress. In order to continue to provide high quality service, the profession must be able to keep pace with accelerating change in the information environment and in the state's societal makeup, and it must be able to provide opportunities to persons of all origins to gain access to its services and to membership in the profession itself. Professional education is the key to meeting these demands, but therein lies the problem of demand and supply.

Rather than expanding to meet the demand for professional education in librarianship, however, opportunities for library education have been diminishing in California. This report examines this problem and its implications for academic and other libraries and explores some potential opportunities available to the CSU for addressing the problem. Emphasis is placed on seeking innovative approaches to library education which can take advantage of the breadth of resources and strengths of a large and comprehensive university system, a system whose mission is fully consistent with meeting the educational needs of the library profession.

II. THE PROBLEM OF DEMAND AND SUPPLY: LIBRARIANS AND LIBRARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

To understand the demand side of the library education problem it is necessary to look at the "demographics" of librarianship, including projections of professional positions in the labor force and the impact of anticipated retirements. The changes occurring in the nature of library services, in the "information environment," are also important factors on the demand side. The supply side of the problem requires an examination of the current status of library education. California mirrors a nationwide picture of inadequate opportunity for pro-

fessional education in librarianship and, when comparative data are considered, actually shows the problem in magnification.

The Demographics of Librarianship and Library Education

In 1990 California universities enrolled a total of 596 students in Master of Library Science programs. Nationwide enrollment in MLS programs totaled 9,382. With 12% of the nation's population, California's share of MLS students was only 6%. By comparison, New York universities enrolled 1,229 MLS students (13%), Texas enrolled 770 (8%), and Illinois enrolled 650 (7%).[1]

The comparative paucity in California's library school enrollments might not be significant if it could be shown that the demand for library professionals in the U.S. in general, and California in particular, is stagnant. Such is not the case, however. In its Spring 1990 issue, Job Outlook Quarterly examined the job market for librarians and projected a 10% increase in professional positions in the 1990s, a total of 14,000 positions nationwide. The largest increase in demand is expected in special libraries such as law, medical and corporate libraries. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics looked at the library profession in 1985 and projected an increase of 19,000 professional positions from 1986 to 2000, from 136,000 to 155,000.

The increase in professional librarian positions is only part of the demand picture. The aging library workforce means that losses from retirement will grow steadily over the coming decades. A 1989 study of anticipated retirements in U.S. libraries concluded that by the year 2000 as many as 70,000 librarians will reach (or will have reached) retirement age.[2] Library schools in the U.S. presently confer slightly over 3,800 MLS degrees per year.

What do these numbers mean for California? According to the California State Library, there are about 1,000 libraries in operation in California not counting school libraries. These are a mix of public libraries, academic libraries, and special libraries such as corporate and county law libraries. With the steady growth in California's population, the demand for library services of all kinds will likely grow as well, and California's librarians will be reaching retirement along with their colleagues in other states. The gap between demand and supply for library professionals will continue to grow wider.

Librarianship and the Information Explosion

Not many years ago, librarians had to be concerned only with collecting and providing access to books, periodicals and a few miscellaneous items such as maps and phonograph records. Now electronic formats such as CD-ROM, floppy disk, magnetic tape, and online databases provide access to a staggering array of information. The challenge of the modern librarian is to sift through all this information and to provide patrons with only that which is appropriate to their needs. It is a challenge which requires not only an understanding of the complexities of the information environment, but also of the technology to access it.

The technology of information access has, in fact, become as much a challenge for librarians as information itself. The increasingly computerized environment of the library requires that the librarian possess skills more akin to those of the systems analyst than of the traditional custodian of books and magazines of an earlier era. Computerized online catalogs, computerized circulation, online cataloging and CD-ROM databases are now central components in the operation of most large libraries. Indeed, many libraries have created "systems librarian" positions which require highly specialized skills needed to keep the automated sytems running smoothly. The library technology environment is changing as rapidly as the information environment.

Given the nature of information and the technology of its access, the projected growth in employment opportunities in libraries should come as no surprise. Special or "corporate" libraries are a good example. Social observers such as Peter Drucker have argued persuasively that the business world now functions in an Age of Information, that failure to manage information effectively can be fatal to a corporation in a competitive business climate. Libraries staffed with professional librarians serving specialized needs in the corporate, legal and medical communities are now recognized as indispensable.

Academic and public libraries must also struggle to keep up with changes in information and access technology to serve the varied research needs of students, faculty and the general public. Not only must newly created or vacated librarian positions be filled with professionals trained to deal with these changes, but also currently employed librarians must have opportunities for formal training to maintain up-to-date skills. Continuing education thus becomes an important function of library education programs.

A high degree of mobility is not a common characteristic of potential library professionals. The costs of relocating to another state for a library education combined with out-of-state tuition are prohibitive for most students seeking to enter the profession. The fact that the profession is a relatively low paying one certainly comes into play in this constraint. Moreover, an inordinate number of people who choose to go to graduate library school are older students who have family commitments or jobs which prevent relocation. "Your chances of becoming a librarian decrease astronomically," Will Manley observes, "if there is no library school convenient to your home."[3] Manley adds that this reality is made more dismal due to the fact that, while there are over 10,000 public libraries alone in the U.S., there are but fifty-two places where an accredited MLS degree can be earned.

Only three of those fifty-two places where an MLS can be earned are in California. Two are in the Bay Area, the University of California at Berkeley and San Jose State University; one is in the south, the University of California at Los Angeles. (A fourth school of library science at the University of Southern California was allowed to wither and finally was closed a few years ago. USC's leadership did not believe library science fit into the university's educational mission.)

The two University of California library schools, while providing excellent education at the MLS level, are limited by both capacity and mission in their abilities to meet the demand for library education in California. UCLA's enrollment in the MLS program is capped at 200, and Berkeley enrolls fewer than 150. Concerning mission, both grant doctoral degrees in library science and view the training of scholars and academic librarians as central to what they are about. And, by dint of university-wide policy, both discourage part-time students who might attempt the MLS through evening or weekend courses. To quote Beverly Lynch, dean of the UCLA library school: "The difficulty for people who are working in libraries and who *only want the credential* [i.e. the MLS, emphasis is the writer's] is that two of the three schools are in research universities and you must move to those universities to get the education."[4]

Interestingly, the University of California itself recognized the need for expanded educational opportunities for librarians as far back as 1967. A study of the need for additional UC schools of library science was conducted in that year for the university's systemwide office. Among the study's recommendations were the following: that the two schools at UCLA and Berkeley increase their enrollment quotas and diversify their faculties, that new non-conventional and interdisciplinary pro-

grams be established for the training of library professionals, and that two new library schools in the University of California be opened within five years.[5] The study's conclusions, only some of which were acted upon, were based on a study of the demand and supply of librarians in California.

Turning to the twenty campuses of the California State University, its one library school at San Jose represents the third place where a library education is available in California. San Jose State's program enrolls about 250 students, but unlike the UC schools, it sees its mission solely as training librarians at the master's degree level to serve in the full range of libraries in California. Also, unlike the UC schools, the San Jose State program has actively sought to meet the educational needs of those fully employed by permitting part-time enrollment and by developing off-campus programs in other parts of the state to address the problem of limited student mobility. That "extended education" approach to professional training in librarianship will be examined in more detail in the pages which follow.

III. ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS IN EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIBRARY EDUCATION

Given the reluctance of the University of California, and given the nature of the mission of the CSU system, the most likely avenue for expansion of opportunities in library education would appear to lie with the CSU. Professional education at the master's degree level is recognized by California's Master Plan for Higher Education as an important part of CSU's mission. Moreover, CSU campuses welcome part-time students who are working full time and who must enroll in weekend or evening classes. What follows is an examination of some of the opportunities, as well as significant constraints, for expansion of library education in the CSU.

Accreditation

The American Library Association (ALA) is recognized nationally as the accrediting body for schools of library science. As can be seen from its record of withholding accreditation from institutions which were found to not measure up (including a program at CSU Fullerton in the early 70s), the ALA takes its accreditation function seriously. The library community also takes accreditation seriously; job hunting by a graduate of an unaccredited library school is a very difficult undertaking. The vast majority of advertisements for librarian positions in

the U.S. specify an MLS degree from an ALA accredited institution as a minimum requirement.

The ALA Committee on Accreditation employs standards which address student admissions standards, faculty quality, currentness and breadth of the curriculum, library resources, and overall support of the library school within the institution. Periodic visits by accreditation teams ensure that ALA standards are adhered to.

While ALA accreditation serves to foster high quality educational programs in librarianship, it can also serve as a serious obstacle in the establishment of new programs. A school of library science must be well established before the ALA will consider accreditation, but it is extraordinarily difficult to attract talented students and faculty to a program which has yet to be accredited.

Costs of Establishing a New Library School

Establishing a new library school designed to meet the accreditation standards of the ALA requires a sizable commitment of an institution's resources over a period of several years. It could take perhaps five years of operation before ALA would agree to a site visit, and of course there is no guarantee that accreditation would follow. Dr. James Healey, director of the library school at San Jose State, estimates a five-year library school developmental cost totaling close to $2.5 million. This cost includes a minimum complement of seven faculty, enrichment of the institution's library resources and online services to support the MLS curriculum, and the purchase of equipment such as microcomputers, modems, and necessary software.

While the establishment of a new academic program in library science might be relatively inexpensive compared to a program which requires extensive investment in laboratory hardware and difficult-to-recruit faculty, the accreditation issue makes the undertaking a daunting one despite justification based on regional or statewide needs. All of this assumes, again, that the institution could find a large number of students willing to accept unaccredited degrees and faculty willing to teach in an unaccredited library school.

San Jose State's Fullerton Program

In response to growing frustration on the part of library administrators and prospective students in southern California, San Jose State's Division of Library and Information Science established an extension program located on the CSU Fullerton

campus. The program began in the fall of 1989 and enrollment has steadily grown to a total of about 200 students in 1991.

The enrollment in the Fullerton program is remarkable evidence of the demand for the MLS in southern California; some students are driving from as far as San Diego, and each course costs $500 because the program, as extended education, is self supporting. Most of the students are employed full time; some work in libraries and are seeking advancement, while others are employed in another field and are seeking a career change.

By carefully paralleling the curriculum in the south to that offered at San Jose, the ALA accreditation of the library school at San Jose is extended to the MLS degrees earned by the students at Fullerton. In addition, the comprehensive examination required for completion of the degree is read by faculty at San Jose (the passing rate for students at the Fullerton program has, in fact, exceeded that of the students at the home campus).

While the Fullerton program has succeeded in providing southern California students a means for attaining an accredited MLS degree, the intent in establishing it was not to continue it indefinitely as an extended education program, but rather to move it to state-supported status in 1991. One reason is cost to the student; the 42 units required for the degree cost a Fullerton student $7,000, more than three times the cost for a full time student at San Jose. Another important reason is the need to recruit full-time regular faculty for the Fullerton program. An established and state supported program is much more desirable from the standpoint of job-seeking faculty.

San Jose State's Fullerton MLS program has exceeded all expectations in its ability to attract students despite its high cost, and it has affirmed the high level of demand which exists for the degree. The problem it faces is the difficulty achieving state supported status and recognition of its enrollment as covered by the university's full-time equivalent budgeting formula. That problem is the result of the unprecedented fiscal difficulties facing the university rather than the result of the merits of the program.

III. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE LIBRARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE CSU

As a system of twenty campuses rich in diversity of faculty, academic programs, and geographical locations, the CSU is well-positioned to respond to the crisis in education for li-

brarianship in California. Indeed, if it is to be responsive to its charge in the Master Plan, the CSU should aggressively seek the resources to respond.

The first priority for the CSU should be the conversion of the San Jose State extended education program to a fully funded, permanent school of library science in southern California. This school does not necessarily need to be located at the Fullerton campus, but it does require a commitment of physical space for classrooms and offices, a microcomputer laboratory, and adequate library resources for the master's level program.

The thorny issue of accreditation surfaces immediately in any consideration of a new library school. However, preliminary discussion with the ALA suggests that there is some flexibility on their part which could avoid the "catch-22" conundrum of needing students and faculty to gain accreditation and needing accreditation to gain students and faculty. The ALA recognizes the critical shortage of library education opportunities in California and is willing to work with the CSU to develop a sort of "provisional" accreditation for a new school provided that it reflects the standards and resources established at the San Jose school.

The ALA is also willing to work with the CSU in finding innovative means of meeting the needs for library education throughout the state. The CSU is in the position of serving as a laboratory for the development of new models for library education which could have nationwide impact while also meeting the state's needs.

Clearly, a new library school in the south, while a necessary beginning, is not sufficient to address the full scope of the state's needs in library education. Several aspects of these needs, along with opportunities for innovative approaches to meeting them, are discussed in the sections which follow.

Systemwide and Regional Programs

The CSU system has for many years been committed to the concept of statewide and regional programs which meet special academic needs. The Statewide Nursing Program provides professional education opportunities for nurses in virtually every corner of the state, and distance learning programs using classes taught via satellite links are now in place. Current CSU telecommunications planning envisions expanding the avenues of electronic networking to include two-way video and audio which can be used for counseling as well as instruction.[6]

Given this environment within the CSU, opportunities exist

for moving professional library education away from the traditional model of the campus-based program limited to only those who are within daily commuting distance. There is, in fact, considerable evidence that library education is well-suited to non-traditional education. A 1990 survey revealed that over 60% of the ALA accredited library school in the U.S. offer off-campus/extension courses.[7] Another study published in 1990 compared graduates from on-campus and off-campus programs and found that, in terms of job satisfaction and professional commitment and accomplishment, there was virtually no difference between the two groups. The authors of the study drew the following conclusions:

> It would appear that [library] schools engaging in a more intensive program of off-campus education are performing a real service, not only to those students who could not get their education in any other way, but to the profession as well. They have succeeded in producing a substantial group of individuals who appear to be the equal to their campus counterparts in every way, when judged by professional accomplishment.[8]

With the establishment of a second library school in the south, the CSU could develop a program reaching out from these two schools to meet the library education needs of every area of the state. This could be accomplished via a combination of off-campus learning centers and televised instruction, the mix of which would be determined by the size of the student population in any given area. Multi-campus cooperation involving other CSU campuses could provide not only the physical facilities for instruction, but also opportunities for students to take advantage of the academic offerings of more than one campus when designing their educational programs.

Affordability, convenience and flexibility are critical components of any library education program aimed at meeting the needs of the full range of potential students. Those potential students include individuals currently working in libraries and wishing to advance as well as those wishing to move into a library career. A carefully designed non-traditional and regional program can make the MLS degree a realistic goal for a large number of talented students regardless of their circumstances.

Dual Degree Programs

The concept of the dual degree program involving library science and another field of study is one worth close examination by the CSU. A number of "cognate" fields of study comple-

ment library science, among these being computer science, education, and public administration. The MLS curriculum at San Jose State recognizes the importance of cognate studies by permitting up to 12 of the degree's 42 units to be earned in an area other than library science.

Formal cooperative arrangements between the library school and other schools and departments could permit the development of programs which would provide graduates with full recognition of accomplishment in two related disciplines. Such recognition would be of considerable value to a student seeking a career in, for example, library automation which combines the fields of library science and computer science. The dual degree program concept is an excellent example of an opportunity for innovation tailored to educational needs.

Continuing Education for Librarians

An important aspect of professional education for librarianship is its role in ensuring that working librarians have a means of polishing their skills and of keeping current in the changing information and library technology environments. A measure of the importance of continuing education can be found in a survey of library education needs conducted in 1988 by the Serra Cooperative Library System.[9] The survey elicited responses from 1,751 people working in academic, public, school and special libraries in San Diego and Imperial counties. Of those respondents, 395 indicated a desire for continuing education in reference/information services, 343 in library automation, and 313 in management/ administration. Courses in other areas such as children's services, ethnic services, and school library/ media were desired as well.

The CSU and its schools of library science can respond to the demand for continuing education by developing professional certificate programs in a variety of speciality areas which would formally recognize the student's achievement and competence. Programs such as these would perform an important role in broadening the experienced librarian's skills and professional outlook, and would improve the quality of service offered by the library in which he or she is employed. Certification programs can also be developed for non-professional library staff who wish to pursue coursework short of the full master's degree curriculum.

The Recruitment of Minorities to the Library Profession

The representativeness of ethnic minorities in the library profession is widely recognized as a serious problem area. The

magnitude of the problem can be seen in an analysis of library degrees conferred in the U.S. In 1986-87, 3,814 MLS degrees were awarded nationwide; only 146 (4%) were awarded to blacks, however, and only 48 (1%) were awarded to Hispanics. Moreover, these proportions actually declined from 1984-85 when 172 degrees were awarded to blacks and 53 to Hispanics.[10] In California the problem of ethnic representation is magnified by its increasing ethnic diversity and growing non-English speaking population. Southern California is in fact the most cultural diverse area in the United States.

By providing affordable library education programs which do not require geographical relocation, the CSU can greatly enhance the profession's ability to attract minorities to its ranks. This would in turn yield more effective public and academic library service to the large ethnic populations of the state.

Another avenue the CSU can pursue in encouraging greater minority representation in the profession is the forgivable loan program. Now in place for the Ph.D. degree, the program provides financial support for prospective minority faculty. The loan is forgiven if the student returns to the CSU as faculty once the degree is completed. Because the MLS is similar to the Ph.D. in its status as the terminal professional degree (for library instead of classroom faculty), the same principle can be applied. Through such a systemwide program, prospective library students can be identified while still undergraduates and supported through the MLS degree. Expansion of the forgivable loan program could be effected immediately and would serve as an important component of the enhancement of library education opportunities in the CSU.

The Role of the CSU Libraries in Library Education

The twenty libraries of the CSU constitute important resources in the improvement of library education opportunities. In addition to providing the information and collection resources required for the coursework of the MLS programs, CSU libraries can provide mentoring and internship opportunities to complement the classroom experience. Structured programs can be established within each library which can match library professional staff members with individual students to enrich their education through personal guidance and first-hand experience from working in a library.

CSU libraries will ultimately benefit from the expansion of opportunities for library education; a larger and more ethnically diverse pool of potential applicants will be the result. And more immediately, libraries will have a pool of highly motivated library science students which can can serve as an effective

supplement to regular staffing. It therefore behooves all CSU libraries to become aggressive participants in this undertaking.

IV. CONCLUSION

The California State University is uniquely suited to solving the state's potentially critical problem of demand and supply in the library profession. Its mission in graduate education, its size and diversity, and its innovation in distance learning and extended education all combine to provide an institutional setting which can enable development of creative approaches to meeting a statewide demand for library education. The CSU can explore the use of entirely new models of library education which could gain attention across the country.

To accomplish the expansion of opportunity for library education, the system as a whole must make a commitment to this goal, and individual campuses and campus libraries must be willing to participate actively in the effort. San Jose State has made a major contribution toward solving the problem through its Fullerton extension program, but that program cannot be viewed as a sufficient--or even permanent--solution. The initiative taken by the library school at San Jose State should rather be seen as pointing the way toward creative directions for improving library education opportunities, and ultimately library services, for all citizens of California.

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